

Opening Statement
Chairman Michael G. Oxley
Committee on Financial Services

Subcommittee on Housing and Community Opportunity
“Housing Affordability”
May 22, 2001

Thank you Chairwoman Roukema.

Today is the second day of hearings by this Subcommittee to address a complex issue on the availability and affordability of housing in our communities.

Today's witnesses bring a unique perspective, representing the private sector and state and local governments.

The first panel will give us some insight on private sector initiatives and how the Federal government can partner with these lending institutions to leverage public and private funds to increase the supply of affordable housing.

Moreover, I am looking forward to our distinguished second panel consisting of elected and state/local housing officials who will discuss their experiences using our Federal housing programs.

In my May third statement during the first day of hearings, I expressed what many of my colleagues and I believe is the best economic development strategy—effective public safety, good schools, and affordable housing. When one of these factors is lagging, the community will deteriorate.

As challenges to one aspect of that strategy—affordable housing—differ greatly across the country, input from those at the local level is of the utmost importance to the debate. Solutions will need to place great emphasis on flexibility and allow communities the discretion needed to address their particular situations.

On a personal note, I welcome fellow Ohioan Mr. William Hinga, President of Banc One Community Development Corporation located in Columbus. As an example of the types of partnerships that leverage private investments with public resources, Banc One collaborated with the Ohio Capital Corporation for Housing to provide \$3.7 million in equity capital for a new 77 unit low-income housing development in Steubenville, Ohio. I thank you and Banc One for your efforts in Ohio as well as your service around this country.

Once again, thank you Madam Chairwoman for providing leadership on this issue.